

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 27, 2017

Mr. Edward Drusina  
Commissioner  
International Boundary and Water Commission  
U.S. Section  
4147 North Mesa, Suite C-100  
El Paso, Texas 79902

Dear Mr. Drusina,

We write to you concerning the news of a dangerous break in the Nogales International Outfall Interceptor (IOI), the main pipeline that delivers sewage waste to the Nogales International Sanitation Project. We fear that the breach, which leaves the Potrero Creek vulnerable to over 10 million gallons of untreated sewage flowing through this pipeline every day, poses a hazard to the countless communities that live downstream of the pipeline. Consequently, the lack of cooperation and consensus between federal government and state and local officials could have widespread implications on the welfare and safety of Nogales' citizens.

The city, the county, and the State of Arizona have long expressed concern to us over the management of this pipeline. We introduced legislation again this year, the *Nogales Wastewater Fairness Act*, which would transfer the unfair financial burden of maintenance and capital upgrades of the IOI pipeline from the City of Nogales, Arizona to the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC). Given that the IBWC has an obligation to manage international infrastructure negotiations and operate the Nogales International Sanitation Project, we seek guidance from your agency on what led to this break and the next steps in managing the situation.

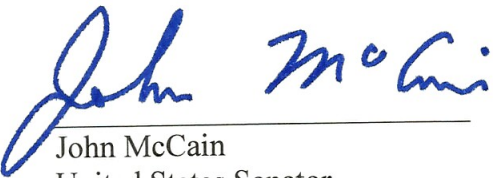
The break's critical nature and proximity to the City of Nogales make it a matter of urgent concern, so we hope to receive prompt answers to our questions. We would like an answer to the following questions as soon as possible:

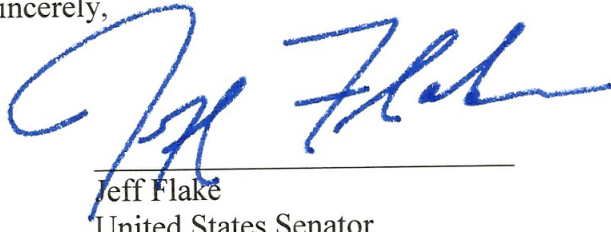
1. What was the cause of the breakage, and what could have been done to avoid such breakage from occurring?
2. What are the next steps for the IBWC in response to this event?
3. Has this breakage put the citizens of Nogales at a health and safety risk?
4. Given the critical nature of this infrastructure to both the City of Nogales, Arizona and the City of Nogales, Sonora, what role does the IBWC have to play in the management and maintenance of this pipeline?

5. What emergency management plan does the IBWC have in place in order to address situations such as this?
6. How has the IBWC worked with the City of Nogales, Arizona in an effort to respond to this emergency and mitigate risk for such events happening again?
7. What steps are being taken to ensure that a break such as this does not occur again?

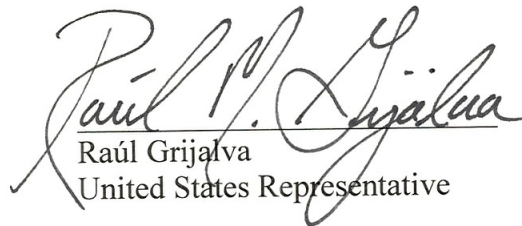
We look forward to working with the City of Nogales, Santa Cruz County, Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA), and our colleagues in Congress to quickly repair the IOI pipeline and move legislation that prevents such breaks from occurring in the future.

Sincerely,

  
John McCain  
United States Senator

  
Jeff Flake  
United States Senator

  
Martha McSally  
United States Representative

  
Raúl Grijalva  
United States Representative